

## Essay Prompts

Please choose one essay from the following prompts and write at least a 1000 word essay. We highly recommend that you attend the workshops for support throughout your research process. If you have any questions or concerns throughout the application, do not hesitate to email us at [scholarship.letfreedomring@gmail.com](mailto:scholarship.letfreedomring@gmail.com).

1. Africans were brought to the Virginia colony in 1619. During 400 years of slavery, emancipation, and the fight for civil rights, African Americans have persevered and made an impact in their communities, states, and the nation. What lessons can you learn from the perseverance of African Americans in the United States? Why is it important to study their struggles and triumphs, and how can you ensure that their contributions to American history and culture are not forgotten?

2. Describe an African-American who has inspired and motivated you throughout your life. What significant impact has this person had on your life?

3. Why does talking about race matter? Have you ever had a racist encounter, if so, how did that impact you? If not, consider a few questions to discuss:

- When were you first aware of your race?
- What do you remember from childhood about how you made sense of human differences?
- What childhood experiences did you have with friends or adults who were different from you in some way?
- How, if ever, did any adult give you help thinking about racial differences?

4. The United States has a long and notable history of suppressing and destroying Black communities. Discuss the significance of Juneteenth and contrast it with a significant event that has impacted the Black community.

6. The United States Supreme Court plays an instrumental role in shaping our understanding of the US Constitution. Name a case that was heard by the Supreme Court and explain how the court's ruling helped or hindered women running for public office. Provide a specific example by citing a woman's experience running for office. Did this case affect the record-breaking number of women running for office today? If so, how?

7: Discuss how the interpretation of the US Constitution has changed electoral laws and affected women's campaigns by comparing the experiences of two women who ran for office, with one woman running before 1970 and the other running after 1970. Consider the political context of each election, including the year, state, etc. What factors contributed to these women having different or similar experiences?

8. Civil discourse is a concept that goes beyond a simple dictionary definition, and understanding it involves a combination of personal experience and 'big ideas.' Perhaps it is something you recognize from an occurrence in your own life. Maybe you can easily recognize when it is missing. Differing perspectives are a key part of learning, of democracies, and of civil society. **For this essay**, we ask you to not only share your comprehension of what civil discourse is meant to be but also relate what it looks like when it works – and when it doesn't – and why. Perhaps you will choose to include mention of a time when you, yourself, were part of an exchange intended to understand something – how did you go about it?

- We encourage you to bring emotion, creativity, specific examples (including current events), and well-researched facts into what you write. A good essay will demonstrate how civil discourse is not just an abstract idea, but is, in fact, an action inspired by constitutional principles, and demonstrated through civic virtues. We want to know what you think civil discourse truly means!